

Counting Lions



Title: Counting Lions

Author: Katie Cotton

Illustrator: Stephen Walton

Age Range: 7-10

Topic/Themes: Endangered Species; Animal Welfare

Vocabulary:

Items Needed for Center: device to show video of illustrator's work

See video of this book read aloud here: [Counting Lions](#)

Volunteer readers should preview both the foreword and the About the Animals section (following the story, pp. 21-24).

★ 3rd Grade Common Core Reading Standard ★

1. Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

I. INTRODUCTION (PREP QUESTIONS)

- Hold up the book, introduce the title, author, and illustrator, and ask students to share their reactions to the cover (maybe size of the book, image, etc.). Ask students to predict how the image was created (they will likely predict a camera), and then share with them that the illustrator actually used charcoal and drew each illustration. Ask students to share examples of charcoal that they know.
- Have students discuss the meaning of **endangered species** and ask them to share animal examples that they know. Tell students that endangered animals are examples of **cause and effect** by explaining to students that an **effect** is something that *happens*, and a **cause** is something that *makes* it happen (**Cause → Effect**). [To model: pretend to hold an egg in the air; pretend to drop the egg; ask students to identify the broken egg on the floor as the **cause** or **effect**; ask them to then identify what caused the egg to break (dropping).] Have students decide whether animals in danger are a **cause** or an **effect**, and why. Have them cite possible causes for decreasing animal populations (hunting, poaching, global warming, increasing human habitation decreases native animal habitats, etc.).

II. INTEGRATIVE STRATEGIES

During Reading:

- P. 4: Read; ask students what the author means with the first sentence, "Two gorillas breathe the same breath."
- P. 6: Read; reread second sentence aloud and ask students to identify the author's use of **alliteration** (when two or more words begin with the **same sound**): "They are *peaceful patterned* giants wandering from *place to place*, *sleepless surveyors* of the grasslands."
- P. 7: Read; reread the sentences, "Does she know they are too *few*? What *future* is there for these *four future fighters*?" and have students again identify the author's use of **alliteration**. Ask students to discuss the author's meaning in those two sentences.
- P. 9: Read; reread the sentence, "Many miles are covered in the ceaseless search for food and water – a never-ending journey for these five travelers" and ask students to define **ceaseless** using context clues.
- P. 12: Read; ask students what the author means in the phrase, "...not knowing that this rugged world of rock is the only home for their kind."

- P. 16: Read; reread, “The *flotilla of females* will *find* the beach, and they will *struggle* across thick *sand* – making *painful progress*-to lay their *precious eggs*” and have students identify the examples of **alliteration**.
- P. 19: Read; ask students to discuss the meaning of “... there are predators that prowl its edges. Many a sip has been cut short by the leap of a cat or the snarl of a hyena...”

III. INTEGRATIVE STRATEGIES

Post Reading:

- Show students the final illustration of the lion at the end of the book.
- Show students the “About the Animals” section. Using the Four Tigers section, point out their protection status is *Endangered*.
- Read aloud the sentences, “Over the last twenty-five years, tiger numbers have fallen by half. Hunting, forest destruction due to logging, farming, and human settlement; poaching, and conflict with people have all contributed to this decline.” Have students identify **Cause→ Effect** (**effect**: Endangered; tiger numbers have fallen by half); (**causes**: hunting, forest destruction, farming, human settlement, etc.).
- Ask students to discuss the author’s purpose for writing this book. Ask students how the size of the book was important to the message as well as the beauty of the large illustrations. Ask students why it is important that children are aware of the message?

IV. SMALL GROUPS

- Show students the upper 5-minute video of illustrator Stephen Walton creating the lion illustration for the book: <http://www.stephenwaltonfineart.com/section803608.html>
- As time allows, share the last paragraphs from additional portions from “About the Animals” (penguins, turtles, macaws) and have students decide **Cause→ Effect**.